



From The Dean's Desk

TTUHSC School of Pharmacy

January 2006 - Issue 38

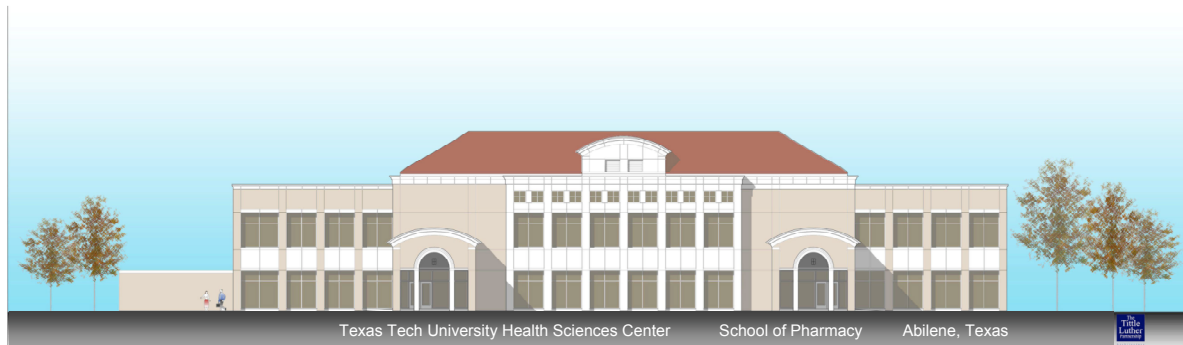
THECB Approves SOP Abilene Expansion

As most of you probably know by now, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board on January 26 approved TTUHSC's plan to expand the pharmacy program into Abilene. The Abilene site will join Dallas-Fort Worth and Lubbock as satellite campuses to our main campus here in Amarillo.

The first classes for the Abilene program are scheduled to begin in August 2007 with 40 students, which will expand our class size from 88 to 128 per year. Like Amarillo, the Abilene satellite campus will offer all four years of our Pharm.D. program. That means there will be 160 students in Abilene by the start of the 2010-2011 academic year.

A group from Abilene approached TTUHSC in the fall of 2004 about the possibility of expanding the pharmacy program to their city. The group, known as the Abilene Community Partners, includes the City of Abilene, the Economic Development Corporation of Abilene, Hendrick Health System, Sears Methodist Retirement Centers, the Dodge Jones Foundation, the Dian Graves Owen Foundation and the Shelton Family Foundation.

ACP has pledged \$14 million to date, which will subsidize the program through FY2011 and pay for the land and construction of a 36,000-square-foot facility for the program. The facility will be constructed on the grounds of the Hendrick Medical Center campus near downtown Abilene.



Getting the Abilene program up and running will undoubtedly require some long hours and hard work for many of us, including many faculty and staff in Amarillo, Lubbock and Dallas-Ft. Worth. But I'm certain we can all pull together and help bring the same high quality program to Abilene that we have established at our other program sites.

HSC Announces Phonathon Scholarship Recipients

Seventeen of our students were recently named recipients of a \$500 Health Science Center Phonathon Scholarship. The recipients include: *Supriya Abraham (P3 – Amarillo); Elaine Chen (P2); Nancy Dunseth (P2); Joyce Fender (P1); Theresa Gerst (P3 – Dallas/Ft. Worth); Sarah Gressett (P4 – Lubbock); Jenna Hensley (P1); Alisa Hirschberg (P4 – Amarillo); Mary Klein (P3 – Lubbock); Tien Le (P1); Daniel Leslie (P4 – Amarillo); Rachel Mason (P3 – Amarillo); Penny Sitka (P2); Jessen Thomas (P2); Leigh Wilson (P3 – Lubbock); Miriam Wolters (P4 – Amarillo) and Martin Ziska (P3 – Amarillo).*

ACPE Completes SOP Accreditation Process

Congratulations to all the faculty, staff and students for your significant efforts in helping to make the TTUHSC SOP a strong professional program. Your efforts were confirmed February 8 when the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education informed us that we have received a full six-year accreditation through June 2012. A six-year accreditation is the maximum term possible and is not easy to achieve. Not many of the nation's pharmacy schools have such a clean accreditation status. The ACPE report shows we fully comply with all standards with no contingencies or deficiencies relative to any standard. We continue to have an outstanding professional program, a strong graduate program, effective teaching and respected research, patient care and professional services. Each of you should be very proud of your accomplishments and the hard work you have put forth to make our program successful.

I think it is appropriate to extend a special thank you to [Dr. Chuck Seifert \(Regional Dean – Lubbock\)](#), who chaired the Self-Study Committee, [Jo Long \(Executive Associate to the Dean – Amarillo\)](#) and all the faculty, staff, student and alumni members of the Self-Study committee who paid careful attention to details as they guided the review and evaluation of our Pharm.D. program over the more than 18 months that preceded the ACPE site visit in November. The process was long and arduous but the results are a testament to your efforts.

I hope each of you will accept my personal “Thank you” for all you accomplish each day to make the SOP a great place to learn, work and build lasting personal relationships.

Poison Center Leads Carbon Monoxide Project

The Texas Panhandle Poison Center recently coordinated a very worthwhile project whereby Kidde Nighthawk carbon monoxide alarms were distributed and installed free of charge to all 210 Amarillo households that receive Meals on Wheels.

TPPC educator [Ronica Farrar](#) and the TPPC staff worked with the Junior League of Amarillo and the Senior Advantage Program of NWTTHS to make the project a success. The first half of the distribution took place January 12 and covered the NWTTHS Meals on Wheels routes. The second half took place January 13 along the BSA routes.

According to the *Journal of the American Medical Association* carbon monoxide is a deadly poison responsible for up to 2,000 deaths every year. In Texas alone in 2005, the Texas Poison Center Network handled 328 exposures, including two deaths and 50 cases where those affected suffered moderate to major effects. Ronica says these incidents are all preventable with the installation of a carbon monoxide alarm and that the elderly are among those most susceptible to carbon monoxide poisoning.

A big pat on the back to the TPPC staff for coordinating this important community project.



TPPC Educator Ronica Farrar is surrounded by the 210 carbon monoxide alarms that were installed free of charge in Amarillo Meals on Wheels households.

SOP Student Organizations Prepare for Health Fair

The student organizations at the SOP are putting together a health fair March 11 from 9 a.m. -3p.m. at the Ambassador Hotel in Amarillo. Each organization will sponsor a booth and is seeking student volunteers and preceptors for the event. Activities will include: cholesterol, blood pressure, glucose, and osteoporosis screenings as well as information booths on smoking cessation and nutrition.

Dr. Sherry Luedtke (Associate Professor, Dept. of Pharmacy Practice – Amarillo and Associate Dean for Professional Affairs) says the event is particularly in need of faculty preceptors to supervise the screenings and to assist the students as they disseminate information.

Dr. Luedtke says the health fair is a way to combine most of the smaller individual screenings held each semester into one large event.

“We are attempting to consolidate many of the screenings into single large events as we know that it is difficult for faculty to volunteer time with their own busy schedules,” Dr. Luedtke explained.

If the event is successful, Dr. Luedtke hopes to work with the student organizations to hold similar events at each campus, hopefully in the fall and spring.

“We’d love to have faculty from Lubbock or Dallas assist in the event and then hopefully provide some guidance for an event like this on their regional campuses in the fall,” Dr. Luedtke said.

If you are interested in assisting in any way please contact Dr. Luedtke or one of the student organizations.

Cynthia Raehl, Pharm.D., FASHP, FCCP

*Professor and Chair, Clinical Research and Development
Department of Pharmacy Practice – Amarillo*



Dr. Cynthia Raehl

Dr. Raehl, a Wisconsin native, joined the SOP faculty in January 1996 as the founding Chair for the Department of Pharmacy Practice. She is the youngest of four children and grew up on a small dairy farm in rural Wisconsin. Her parents, one sister and one brother reside on the home farm. Her second sister lives in Frisco Texas.

Dr. Raehl and her husband, Dr. CA Bond, regularly enjoy shipments of aged Wisconsin cheese (especially when they are watching the Green Bay Packers and UW Badgers on TV). They are proud parents of Buckingham Breeze Bond, Ph.D. (pharmacy dog). You may know him as Bucky, a four-year old Shih Tzu.

In her spare time Dr. Raehl enjoys cooking and many sports even though her golf handicap is high and she is still learning to ride a bicycle without falling off! She is an active member of her church and often takes Bucky to visit nursing home residents. Dr. Raehl continues to serve professional pharmacy associations, which she says complements her role as a teacher, nursing home consultant pharmacist, researcher and academic administrator.

Thomas Thekkumkara, Ph.D.

*Professor and Associate Dean for Reserach
Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences - Amarillo*



*Dr. Thomas
Thekkumkara*

Dr. Thekkumkara was born and raised in Kerala, geographically located in the extreme southwest Indian peninsula. The area is flanked by the Arabian sea on the west and the mountains of the Western Ghats on the east and covered by verdant coconut groves.

After receiving his Ph.D. Dr. Thekkumkara immigrated to the United States in 1984 and joined the Department of Biochemistry at Case Western Reserve University as a postdoctoral fellow. He started his professional career at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation where he became interested in the biochemical and molecular mechanisms of action of the renin-angiotensin system, which is a critical player in blood pressure maintenance and electrolyte balance. After serving for five years on the faculty of the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center he joined the SOP's pharmaceutical sciences faculty in 2000 as an associate professor. Currently, he is a tenured professor and is the SOP's Associate Dean for Research.

Dr. Thekkumkara's wife, Mary, is a registered medical technologist (microbiologist) at Baptist St. Anthony's hospital in Amarillo. Their family includes two sons: 20 year-old Justin and 19-year old Jason. Both boys attend undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at Austin and are proud of the UT's National Championship victory at the Rose Bowl. He has one brother who still lives in India and is a journalist/reporter for the All-India radio.

In his spare time Dr. Thekkumkara enjoys watching his pet fish "Oscar", gardening and cooking authentic Indian dishes.

David Watson

Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration
Staff – Office of Finance and Administration - Amarillo



Bryce, Julie and Lori Watson

David was born and raised in the Amarillo area and graduated from Canyon High School in 1983. He earned a BBA in Finance and an MBA, with emphasis in Technical Communications, from Texas Tech University.

When he graduated from TTU in 1988 David says he couldn't find his dream job so he joined the US Navy!

"I was commissioned in the *Officer Sea Air Mariner* program, which required that I spend two years on active duty and six years in the reserves."

After he received his commission in 1989, David headed to San Diego and reported to the USS Downes where he served as a Supply Officer.

David and his wife, Janet, married in June 1990. A couple of months later, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait and the USS Downes was deployed.

"After the two-year active duty commitment, I had been at sea more than I cared for," David says. "The Navy was a great experience, but I was ready to go home to Texas after my two-year commitment was over."

David and Janet moved back to Amarillo and he was employed by Pantex for six years and a University of Texas research center located in Amarillo for five years before joining the SOP. Janet, who now works for Bell Helicopter, has worked for Xcel Energy, Utility Engineering and several oil and gas companies.

David and Janet have been blessed with three children: Julie a seventh-grader at Bonham Middle School, Bryce a fourth-grader at Puckett Elementary and Lori a third-grader also at Puckett. The children are responsible for two dogs, a cat, five fish, and a frog!

"We have way too many animals," Janet says.

Julie, Bryce and Lori are all active in sports, but when time allows, David and his family like to spend time at a family ranch in Donley County, go boating at Lake Tanglewood or travel.